

Adeltha

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ADELTHA

*THE STORY OF A WOMAN'S
LIFE AND WORK*

ADELTHA;

*A True Story of a Woman's Life
and Work.*

BY

MRS. ELIZABETH M. ROWLAND.



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ADELTHA.

WHEN I was a little girl I went with my mother into the country during the summer vacation and boarded for a few weeks in a village on the western edge of Maine, within sight and drive of the White Mountains of New Hampshire. While there I made the acquaintance of a girl of thirteen, which soon ripened into an intimacy of the desperate, all-absorbing, school-girl sort, yet one which lasted twenty years; and it is the story of this girl's life and work that I am to tell.

I tell the story in detail, because the very point of it is that her work was herself, and the only way to understand her influence was to become acquainted with her personally.

At that time Adeltha was a very tall, large girl, rather raw-boned and awkward, with straight, abundant flaxen hair and not a single pretty feature. But she was young, in perfect health, something of a flirt among the boys at the academy, an average scholar, but quick, bright, and interested in every thing that was going on, and distinguished from the other girls by a certain light-heartedness, a bubbling over of animal life

and spirits that gave every body who met her an impression of sunshine and a fresh breeze.

At sixteen, with the maturity of twenty, this typical Yankee girl, like hundreds of others, was teaching. She had already tried her hand in the district schools near home, but now she was at the head of an academy "down east" on the Penobscot, teaching "French and fancy-work and oriental painting," after the manner of the smart girls of the last generation. So far her religious life had consisted in going to church and in learning her Sunday-school lesson, and although she always "said her prayers" when she went to bed, I've heard her say that up to this time she never gave a single minute to thoughts of religion.

My first letter from her was full of her school and her new acquaintances. In a week or two I had another in which she said something like this: "I'm thinking of something else now. I'm trying to be a Christian. Something that the minister has said has set me to thinking."

That was all she had to say about it. I had grown up in an old-fashioned church where the few people who were converted went through a regular order of feeling. First they were "serious," then "under conviction," then they "indulged a hope" and remained "serious," at least for a few months. Mother shook her head when, her term over, Adeltha visited me on her way home. Adeltha was no more "serious" than

ever. She was just as lively and noisy and gay as when she visited me before. But at night she talked with me and prayed with me and said we must try together. Years afterwards she wrote me: "There never was a smaller mustard-seed of faith and purpose in any body's heart than in mine when I began to be a Christian."

The seed was not only small but it was of slow growth. For a year or two she was just an ordinary church member, a good girl in the sense that she was not a bad one, and that was all. She developed physically into almost a beauty. After a slight sickness her flaxen hair grew golden and curly, and her one beauty, a perfect flush that came and went as she talked, gave her face the attraction of color which is at once so charming and so fleeting.

Now was her time of social triumph. She studied in one or two different places and taught in others and every-where she went she made friends with her bright, attractive manner and her warm, sympathetic heart. Men and women found her the best of company. Unmarried men invariably offered to marry her. In one year I remember she had dangling at her heels and unwilling to take "no" for an answer, a gawky back-country lad, a dashing young sea-captain, a Congregational minister, and a New York artist whose name I often see now in the papers; and it was through the perplexities and heartaches and disappoint-

ments of these and other love affairs that there came a discipline which began to change the thoughtless girl into the remarkable Christian woman.

The summer of 1860 came. She was anxious to go South to teach, and through the advice of a summer boarder she advertised in *The National Era*, a Washington paper with a large Southern circulation. The modest advertisement read as follows :—

“WANTED. — A position, South, for a young lady, as governess. Address Rev. —, —, —.”

She gave the name of her uncle, the minister in the village.

I was visiting there when the advertisement was sent on. It was a secret in the family, and as great an event, to be talked over under our breath, as going to Japan would be now. Every day Adeltha would go away by herself and pray that God would decide her future for her. Before I left the answers began to come. Every mail brought them ; if I remember rightly there were fifteen of one sort and another, — a fabulous number the summer boarder said, who had had but one answer herself ; and choosing from among these chances, three spunky Yankee girls set off by October : a friend for Kentucky, her sister for Maryland, and Adeltha for Macon, Georgia.

In December, 1860, South Carolina seceded, and Adeltha's letters were full of the matter. She was an arrant secessionist. "I believe the South ought to be let alone and secede if it wants to, — only I'll come home," she wrote. Then suddenly her letters stopped. Sumter fell. Then came the call to arms. Her sister reached home with difficulty through the blood-stained streets of Baltimore, and her brother joined the Northern army. Spring and summer passed without a word from her, when one September day I received a letter from her, dated New York, and the next day she was with us, at home again, a changed woman — the same and yet not the same.

"I've learned to pray," she said, "though I thought I knew how before. When the letters from home stopped and I found mine did not get through, it began to dawn upon me that I was an exile and a prisoner. Then I began to cry to God for help. They treated me like a dear friend. Before the pinch came they took me to The Springs with them and I joined with them in all their festivities. But when the battle of Manassas came (first Bull Run) and the papers reported the Maine regiments as among those which were all cut up, my heart sunk within me. I knew my brother would be in the army — perhaps he was dead; and I just cried out to God to let me go home.

“But there was no possible way to get home, they told me; all communication was cut off. I lost twenty pounds in a few weeks, till my southern friends said I should die on their hands if they did not get rid of me. I wouldn’t give up. I kept praying. One day we met at a dinner party a man who had just come through the lines by way of Fortress Monroe. Here was my chance. If he could come, I could go. We found a Confederate soldier who was going that way in a day or two to join his regiment. They paid me up every cent in gold and packed me off under the soldier’s care.”

And I might add that they weighed her down with enough letters to post when she got North, to have hung her for a traitor for aught I know.

She committed her way to God and set out on her perilous journey, and verily her way was prepared for her in the midst of her enemies. At Fortress Monroe she found people who had been waiting for weeks, but she was exchanged with only a few hours’ delay. A Union soldier going home on a furlough took her in charge; friends sprang up out of the ground; every body befriended her; and here she was safe at home, her brother in the army, but unharmed, and her simple explanation was: “I cried unto the Lord and he heard me.”

I have been thus particular because I wish to emphasize the fact that a saintly character was

made out of what we should have called unpromising material.

She was now twenty-one years old, but there had been crowded into the last four years of her life more experiences and adventures than fall to the lot of most women in a life-time, and the change that I noticed in her was her wonderful intimacy with God. It did not seem to be prayer so much as an indwelling. She would lay down her book and say with the greatest freedom and simplicity: "I'm going upstairs a little while now. I'm sleepy if I leave my prayers till night." She would be gone an hour, and I would know by the low sound through the closed door that she was praying. Once when I was visiting at the farm in the dead of winter, I would see her, day after day, dress as if to go out-of-doors, take a sleigh-robe, and go away by herself in a cold room for a literal hour of devotion. She carried every thing to God in prayer and expected and received answers. She prayed about the smallest matters and talked of her trust in God with a familiarity which was not irreverent and disgusting only because it was so simple and unconscious.

Every one who met her began to feel this presence of God. She spoke of the Saviour as freely as of her brother in the army, and whether it falls in with any body's theory or not, I am bound to say with just the same light-hearted, fond, personal affection. She would ask a girl to her room

to try to help her find God with no more ado than if she had taken her upstairs to show her a new stitch in crocheting. If young men made love to her, and they continued to, she diverted their minds by trying to convert them. They came to woo and remained to pray. Some of the most remarkable cases I ever knew of personal work for souls were among these would-be lovers, and are not for me to make public.

It was the next year, I think, that she went to teach a private school in a little village in the Connecticut valley. She wrote me often, and the accounts of that winter's work made a great impression on me.

"After I had the school organized," she wrote me, "I asked the class in French to remain awhile one night, as they were the oldest scholars. I told them I wanted to help them to be Christians this winter as well as to teach them their lessons, and after talking with them I prayed with them."

There was no waiting for opportunity, we see; she made her opportunity. Very soon some of her scholars were rejoicing in a new-found hope; then some of the parents were reached; and soon a gracious revival was felt in the church, springing, as far as human eye could see, from the work in that little school.

One incident in connection with it lingers in my memory. A boy or lad, on the debatable ground between boy and man, came to her to ask her to

give him music lessons on the cabinet organ. He worked by day and must take his lesson in the evening ; must call for his teacher and take her to his organ and walk back with her. "I couldn't think of it for a minute," she said. "I was tired with my day's work, and to give up two evenings and take those two walks in all weathers, with that boy and for almost no pay too, for he was poor, why ! the absurdity of it ! But after praying about it, I felt I must do it ; so asking God to accept the work as done for him, I agreed to give the lessons.

"So, as we were plodding along the road in the dark, I asked the young fellow if he was a Christian. He was n't disposed to talk much, but I talked to him and told him what God expected of him and that I should pray for him. The next time he came for me, as soon as we were out of the house, he told me that he had given his heart to God." He told her, too, that after he left her at her door that night he met some of the boys and told them as a joke that his music teacher was going to convert him, and they had a good laugh together over it and made fun of it all. But after he left them it came over him what a wicked thing he had done, and he was so distressed that he went into a barn by the roadside and fell down on his knees before God, asked his forgiveness and promised to take heed to the friendly warning. She wrote me : "This young man had a good mother

who was praying for him, and if I had n't spoken God would have taken some other way to answer her prayers. But because I was willing to speak to him and pray for him, God let me have the privilege of leading him to his Saviour."

Spending the winter in this same village there was a young married woman from Brooklyn, with a family of little children. Her husband had connections in the place, and as he was making some change in his business he had put his family there for the season while he was away. It so happened that Mrs. B., engrossed in family cares, and Adeltha, busy in her school, did not meet for months. In so small a village this may seem incredible, but is perhaps explained by the fact that Mrs. B., who was thoroughly irreligious and took no part in church affairs, had conceived a dislike for the very name of the school-teacher, who, she was sure, was so extra good and pious that she, for her part, did not want to meet her.

Now one morning, it was a Saturday or some holiday, Adeltha felt very much drawn to God in prayer for a particular request, which was that God would take that day's work in charge; that whatever she was led to do might be owned and blessed by him; and, her prayer over, she dressed to go out on a distant errand. It was a perfect day, the sky clear, the air like wine. After a few minutes' walk, a young lady friend overtook her in a sleigh and invited her to get in for a ride, saying, —

“This is my cousin, Mrs. B., and we’re going to Springfield on a lark.”

Without a minute’s hesitation Adeltha jumped in, and off the three young women went; and from my knowledge of two of them I have no doubt they were as noisy and undignified and jolly as three school-girls would have been. Adeltha was like a rubber ball: the reaction from an hour’s prayer was naturally an hour’s laughing. They dined at the Massasoit, and bumped home on nearly bare ground but in great spirits.

In the quiet of her room, however, ‘Deltha thought of her morning prayer.

“I thought it all over,” she told me, “and I could n’t remember that I’d talked about any body or said any thing I ought not to, only I’d been full of fun. I just could n’t help it, it was so nice being out driving on such a day and we were all so happy. So I asked God to forgive what had been wrong, and I was so tired I went straight to bed.”

But God had owned the day whose laughter was consecrated to him. Mrs. B. followed up the new acquaintance and in a very short time came out a decided Christian. She told Adeltha:—

“When Cousin Abby and I saw you on the road that morning, and she said: ‘Let’s ask her to go with us,’ I demurred. I did n’t want you, for I was sure a woman so pious as you were said to be would also be poky. But when I heard

you laugh and joke and enter into our good times all day, I said to myself: 'If a woman can be so pleasant and so nice, and a Christian too, I should like to be one.'"

Mrs. B. clung to her new-found friend, made her leave her boarding-place and come to live with her, saying, —

"Don't pay any board. I'll pay you for coming, if necessary."

Her husband came home, was astonished at the change in his wife, and with the help of this new-found friend, began a Christian life too. I met them at Adeltha's wedding a year or two afterward. They were then both members of Dr. C.'s church, and he had a large class of boys in the Sunday-school and was quite a prominent member of the church.

It was during this year which she spent in Brooklyn and with another friend near New York City that her lungs began to trouble her. She lost her freshness and roundness; had to be careful in bad weather, and without being at all sick, made the discovery that her time of bounding physical vigor was past.

She had always been very much interested in foreign missions, and had she lived twenty years later there is no doubt she would have gone abroad, but single women did not go much till after the war was over. She hailed the opportunity offered by the American Missionary Associa-

tion and went South among its earlier teachers in the spirit of a foreign missionary.

She was now twenty-four years old. The year was one of great hardship, privation, and unceasing toil for herself and sister, who went with her. They sailed in a vessel which proved unseaworthy and narrowly escaped shipwreck. They were sent to Hilton Head Island, opposite Port Royal, at the southern extremity of South Carolina, and labored among the cotton-hands of the plantations there and among the refugees driven in there by Sherman's March to the Sea. The able-bodied blacks were taken as soldiers ; the old and infirm, the women and children were sent to such stations and huddled together like sheep. The teachers' quarters were in a deserted house built in a southern fashion — set up on posts above the ground. At one time sixty negroes lived, ate, and slept in this open space under the house, and the small-pox broke out among them ! Every night the teachers lay down feeling that only God's mercy kept them from dying of pestilence or being burned alive before morning.

The average attendance of their school, which was held in this house with their own chamber for one of the recitation rooms, was one hundred and seventy, in ages varying from four to twenty-five, and to accommodate them at all one half came from eight to twelve in the forenoon and the other half from one to five in the afternoon. It

was not a time for reaping a harvest, or sowing seed even, but only of preparing the ground, and after eight hours' work in the school, these girls spent their evenings in visiting the sick, clothing the naked, holding sewing schools for the mothers, holding or attending three prayer-meetings a week, and at night lay down, wearily, in rooms where the dirty, ragged scholars had been all day : waked to see great rats looking at them through holes in the plastering, and got up night after night to drench their beds with kerosene oil that they might not be devoured by the bedbugs and vermin that swarmed from every crack. This was the *romance* of missionary life in those days.

Stationed on the island there was a colored regiment, officered by white men, and as the teachers in this house were the only other white people in the place, the gentlemen naturally called over pretty often. Her sister writes me :—

“Of course if they came in school hours we took them into the school-room. We often asked our callers to hear classes, we had so many children and our time was so full.

“I remember one officer who had been sick, and who often came over during his convalescence. 'Dellie would always turn the conversation to religious subjects and often to his own personal interest in the matter. If he came during school hours she always had something which she had saved for him to read—a religious

poem or a passage from the Bible marked for him to think about while we were busy. When the lesson was over she would naturally talk with him about the passage. This was the way she did with every one who came to see us, and although so few of them were religious men, they all seemed to enjoy it; at any rate they did n't stay away because of it. We could not let these calls interfere with our regular work, for there was too much to do; but I always felt that, with 'Dellie at least, they were so many additional opportunities to work for the Master. I think they all loved and respected her for it and felt that religion with her was a daily walking with Christ."

She completed the school year, the war ended that spring, and the next September she was married from her father's house to the colonel of this regiment. He was a New York man, in thorough Christian sympathy with herself, and they went to W——, Pennsylvania, to live.

Eight or nine years of bustling activity, of school teaching and travel, of missionary work, care, responsibility, association, and influence with large numbers, and now Adeltha found herself a bride almost in solitude.

W—— was then a thriving town on a branch of the Susquehanna, the center of the lumber-trade of the region; but W—— proper was more than two miles away from the lonely bride. She was

keeping house on a by-road in a sparsely settled suburb up the river. The farms of the stolid Dutch farmers stretched off into the country. Nearer the river were hastily built boarding-houses for the workmen who were putting up an enormous saw-mill for a New York man.

Very happily married to a man thoroughly congenial and in full sympathy with her religiously, those first winter months were yet some of the most trying ones of her life. There she was with hardly an acquaintance, her husband away at the mill all day, no society, no Sunday-school, no literary club, no sewing society even, no church — nothing to do. If it had not been that the river gave them two freshets that season and flooded them out of the house twice, compelling them to dry off and then go back and begin housekeeping again, I don't know what would have become of her! There was no village here, remember, no post-office. There was a stone church nearly a mile away, out of repair and unused except on a Sabbath morning, when an old school Presbyterian minister would appear from some unknown quarter and preach to the few people who remembered the appointment; then he would go off and in two weeks come again in the afternoon, preach, and ride away. Further on there was a Methodist church with a still more sporadic ministration. It was a community hard for a New Englander to understand; a place of dinner-parties given in

great kitchens, where the table fairly groaned with delicacies and wonders of cookery; where the lady of the house often did not appear till dinner-time, and then only in a calico dress with collar omitted, to run and fetch from the oven and pantry, while a friendly neighbor did the honors of the table; a place where many of the thriving elderly heads of families could not read or write. It was not a neighborhood of infidelity or gross wickedness, but of blank stupidity and full-fed ignorance.

Neither the colonel nor his bride were people to endure such a state of things long without an effort to better it. The colonel started out one of his very first Sundays with pictures, cards, and papers, and walking up and down the roads he asked every body he met to come next Sunday to an unfinished part of the mill and sing. In the utter dearth of any thing else to do quite a number gathered, and before the sleepy old elders woke up, the "new man" and his wife had a Sunday-school well in hand.

The place grew rapidly. The saw-mill that year was the largest in the world. Cottages were built for the operatives and the new village straggled all the way from the river to the church. This church was repaired and a parsonage built for the resident minister. Such settlements always take on the impress of the first comer, and the colonel and his wife put their mark here.

The second winter they began to see the fruit of their labors. A great revival spread through the community and it seemed to follow in their footsteps.

There were Christian people on these scattered farms when my friends went there, but they knew nothing about church work. When I visited them a year or two later, there was a church of one hundred and twenty members. It was Adeltha who held the prayer-meeting at her house, who talked with inquirers — not with girls and women only, but with boys and men, young and old. It was she who followed up a woman of doubtful character and gave her no rest till she cut loose from her old ways and started life again as a Christian woman. Taking a walk one day, she saw a working-man following her. She had seen him at the meetings, but did not know his name even. He overtook her and began to talk. He was in great distress of mind and wanted to be a Christian, and Adeltha stood aghast as the man poured into her ears a confession of a crime, a state-prison offence, that under the pressure of God's Spirit he could keep no longer to himself. In all that village, this pretty young woman, an utter stranger, was the only one who impelled the confession.

Nor were her personal efforts confined to outsiders. She had living with her at this time a young German girl, taken in pity from her

drunken parents, and a colored boy, an army waif that her husband had brought from the south, both as ignorant as Hottentots. Under her care and teaching both were hopefully converted. Lizzie joined the church and turned out well. The color-prejudice was very strong and poor Billy was not allowed to join the church or attend the village school. My friends gave him a home and he walked to town every day to study at a colored school, while he attended meetings and worshiped humbly with people who looked more closely at the color of his skin than at the change in his character. Billy now is the Rev. William —, of Virginia. Our kitchen girls and hired men! some of us would have more courage to start for China to-morrow than attempt to do any good among them.

I remember another incident that may be mentioned here. Her father was not a church member though a very excellent man, who supported the church liberally, read his Bible, and brought up his children religiously. Adeltha never doubted his acceptance with God, but thought he lived below his privileges. I myself remember seeing her twice get out of bed, put on a loose dress and slippers, and go downstairs to her father's bedside and pray with him, while I upstairs could hear her tearful, trembling voice as she pleaded with God for her father. Can any young woman think of a harder thing to do than that? She did not

live to see it ; but the time came when her father, nearly eighty years old, publicly and joyfully took upon himself the Christian vows and confessed that for the first time in his life he “enjoyed his religion.”

Let no one imagine her as a solemn or “goody” woman. She was the life of every company. She would play the piano or sing, start games among the young folks, talk of recipes and patterns to the mothers, and lend books to the young men, and give the impression to every one of them that her heart was overflowing with love to God.

“I always put on my prettiest clothes when I try to do any body any good,” she would say, “and tie up my curls with a fresh ribbon. Those dreadful black caps that good old Aunt Newton wears are enough to keep any young person at least from wanting to be a Christian.”

But the beautiful life was nearly over. It only remains to tell how this unselfish spirit, full of work for others, was prepared by it to meet death herself. There came after these years of failing strength a sudden hemorrhage, a persistent cough, and, in anxiety, she took her children and came to her father’s home in Maine for the summer. She was wonderfully better, and went with her sister and myself to Salem to attend the American Board meetings in October. We went into Boston for her to consult Dr. Cullis, with

whom she was acquainted. I myself overheard this conversation as, after a private interview, he came to the door with her.

“If people ask me if I have the consumption, doctor, what shall I tell them?”

“What do you want to tell them?” he answered gravely.

“I want to tell them the truth,” she said, in the old piquant, half-saucy way.

“Then you must tell them that you have,” he returned.

“But mother has coughed thirty years; why can’t I?”

“You won’t cough three,” he said very slowly.

She bade him good-by calmly, and we went home without a reference to the doctor’s verdict.

At first she was as unwilling to die as you or I would have been. What! die? she, a young woman of thirty-one, with a pleasant home, a doting husband, two little children. So much to do, so much to enjoy! It could not be! It should not be!

Contrary to her usual custom she did not talk much about it to any of us. But by the time the winter was over she had settled the whole matter between herself and God.

“The hardest thing,” she told me, “was to be willing to leave my little boys. First I got willing to leave them with God and to trust that they would be as safe without me as with me. But to

think that my little fellows that I loved so much would miss me only a few weeks — would never in all their lives think or care for me as any thing more than a tender tradition — that was the hardest wrench of all.”

She came again the next summer, as bright and cheerful as ever, as full of life, walking some, riding a good deal ; if it had n't been for the dreadful cough we might have been deceived. She was not. “I think I may hold out another year, I am so tough, but I want to be sure to have all my sewing done for the children, because I may not live through the winter, you know.”

But she came again the next summer, evidently failing, but still so happy, so natural and unconcerned that we were fairly staggered. I find among my papers a letter written just before she came. She was writing of some very unfavorable symptoms that had developed, showing, as her doctor told her, that her disease had taken hold of other parts of her body as well as her lungs, and she goes on to write :—

“I wish I could tell you how little any of these changes of body affect my mind. It seems to me, as regards my own present or future, my heart rests in eternal peace. I am not indifferent to life ; life never looked to me so precious, but if the Lord Jesus wants me to die in the coming months I feel in every fiber of my being that that will be the highest good for me, and that he will make it

work for good to all the dear ones I shall leave behind." And then follows an inquiry about the price of a black silk dress, for, as she said, "I have lived so much longer than I thought I should, I've worn out all my clothes." Black silk dresses are seldom discussed in such a spirit! And when she showed me the new dress that summer, she said simply, "I sha'n't want it after this year, and I've had the skirt made long and I've put by enough for a new waist so that sister Carrie can have a nice dress out of it."

From another letter I copy this : —

"I have read and prayed much about the higher Christian life this winter, and I have surely entered into that life *in spots* (I don't know how else to express it). As I wrote before, as far as death is concerned, I have *entered into* rest. I never think of it without a thrill of triumph, and hundreds of times this winter I have felt these victorious words, 'O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory?' 'Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' I have trusted the whole thing to Christ, and I can't feel that death will be any thing to me but meeting him face to face whom not having seen I love. When I hear ministers in their sermons speak 'of the 'cold waters of the Jordan of death,' or the 'darkness of the grave,' I smile, for I feel in my heart that there is no coldness or darkness, no shadow even before me; it is all sunshine. Now

I have no doubt there is some 'temperament' in this, but there is more grace. For two years ago it seemed very sad to me to think of dying before I got to be an old woman, and to die young seemed like a cutting off, a blasting, and now I think it must be a new birth into a fuller life. When I realize that through this victory that God has given me, I am so much happier in view of an early death than the majority of Christians, I feel that I want the same overcoming faith in regard to every thing in life. I can't say yet that I have no burden about my boys, but I expect to say it. There is so much trash written about the higher life and perfection that it is very confusing; but I mean the life that Jesus meant when he said, 'If ye abide in me,' and what Paul meant when he said, 'Christ liveth in me.' "

She literally set her house in order, told us all what we were to have as keepsakes — mind you this was not when she was on her dying-bed, but well enough to visit, to go to church occasionally, and to ride about. "This is my last visit home and I want to make the most of it. I am sure I shall be in a better home by another summer," she would say, as simply and with no more emotion than if she was getting ready to move into another street; so simply that she fairly compelled us to receive such statements without a word of dissent or a tear. She wrote to all her friends and made sure that the unconverted ones had at least a mes-

sage. She talked with us of the journey to a better land she was soon to take, and she certainly gave me the impression that she dreaded death less than getting to New York alone with her children.

She left Maine early in the fall and failed rapidly after her return to Pennsylvania. Her last letter to me was written in November, and while the most of it is like a glimpse of heaven, in one or two expressions the old human way of looking at things shows itself, as in this :—

“All my friends, children of God, are praying for me, that I may get well. Sometimes I feel afraid God may be over-persuaded. This sounds strange, but when I pray about it I can't help saying, ‘Dear Lord, don't mind their desires if thou wouldst rather I should come to heaven now.’ ”

In another place she says : “I wish it was as easy to live near to God in health as in sickness.”

In the two months of exceeding suffering that followed, her husband wrote me : “She lives constantly in the presence of Jesus and she says no one can tell how real every thing about heaven has become. And her cheerfulness and thoughtful care of every body but herself dries all tears from the eyes of her friends.”

She chose a spot in the cemetery for her body to be laid — a breezy, sunny slope, where Howard and Harry, her little boys, might come and play and not feel gloomy.

Her father and mother were with her at the last. She kept her bed but six or eight days and was released from pain and entered into her Saviour's presence in January.

I remember the day the telegram came which announced that 'Dellie had gone home. Her sister and I sat and talked together of her. We could not weep; there was nothing to weep for. "I feel as if she was nearer now than when she was alive," her sister said. And when her parents returned the next week and told us of her last hours, if we shed tears, they were those of rejoicing. She had made heaven so real that we could not mourn. There was nothing to mourn for.

There are two or three very obvious lessons from such a life as this.

I. Fruitfulness of a short life. We expect to see aged saints, but hardly look for them among young married women. Her work was mainly done between eighteen and thirty. She died at thirty-three, and yet scores will arise to call her blessed.

II. A woman who is really in earnest about serving God will find opportunities wherever she is placed, and in the midst of her commonest activities.

III. The secret of her power over others was God's power over her. The Bible and prayer were

her never-failing fountain of grace. A tremendously energetic woman, a real "Yankee driver;" never idle for a minute, yet in the busiest days she neither omitted nor cut short her time of communion with God. It was not only her source of strength, but her remedy for perplexity. One winter she had a family of ten—an invalid mother-in-law; a raw girl in the kitchen; Billy, the black boy; a disagreeable and uncongenial relative, and the school-teacher, to board, "It takes a great deal of grace to live this winter," she said. "When Sarah aggravates me to death, I just shut my mouth and go upstairs and pray."

IV. Religion does not change the temperament but uses it to make different types of Christians. If she had tried to be any thing but herself, what a miserable failure she would have been. The gay, light-hearted, volatile girl, fond of pretty clothes, of the boys, of a good time, when God had taken hold of her in every part of her nature, became the buoyant, courageous, sympathetic, charming Christian that won hearts with a word and held them with a smile.

V. Small beginnings of Christian purpose are to be encouraged, not despised. If it is truly a heavenly seed with life within itself, God will take care that it grows. He will send just such circumstances and such discipline as will water its roots and nourish its branches. He will decide, too, what kind of fruit it shall bear.

